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Information and communication technologies for development

Report of the Second Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-fourth session the item entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

2. The Second Committee considered the item at its 22nd, 23rd, 30th, 33rd, 34th and 41st meetings, on 27 and 28 October, 3, 10 and 12 November and 9 December 2009. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/64/SR.22, 23, 30, 33, 34 and 41). Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 2nd to 7th meetings, from 5 to 7 October (see A/C.2/64/SR.2-7).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes at the regional and international levels (A/64/64-E/2009/10);

(b) Letter dated 6 March 2009 from the representative of the Sudan to the Secretary-General (A/64/65);

(c) Letter dated 30 September 2009 from the representative of the Sudan to the Secretary-General (A/64/489).

4. At the 22nd meeting, on 27 October, an introductory statement was made by the Chief of the Science and Technology Section of the Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (see A/C.2/64/SR.22).

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II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.11

5. At the 30th meeting, on 3 November, the representative of Azerbaijan, on behalf of Afghanistan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway" (A/C.2/64/L.11).

6. At its 34th meeting, on 12 November, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

7. At the same meeting, the representative of Azerbaijan orally corrected the draft resolution and announced that Australia, Finland, Iraq, Israel, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Switzerland had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Subsequently, India, Japan, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

8. Also at its 34th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.11, as orally corrected (see para. 16, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/64/L.26 and A/C.2/64/L.62

9. At the 33rd meeting, on 10 November, the representative of the Sudan, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" (A/C.2/64/L.26), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006 and 62/182 of 19 December 2007, Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, 63/202 of 19 December 2008 and other relevant resolutions,

"*Noting* that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting also that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will further enrich the information society,

"*Recalling* the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, as endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society

adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and endorsed by the General Assembly,

"*Recalling also* the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

"*Taking note* of the 2009 report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes at the regional and international levels,

"*Welcoming* the efforts undertaken by Tunisia, host of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant international and regional organizations, for organizing annually the ICT 4 All Forum and technological exhibition as a platform within the framework of the follow-up to the World Summit to promote a dynamic business environment for the information and communication technologies sector worldwide,

"*Stressing* the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all,

"*Recognizing* the importance of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum in the discussion of public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet,

"*Recalling* paragraphs 69 and 71 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society on 18 November 2005, on the process of enhanced cooperation to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet,

"*Recalling* also the first to fourth meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens from 30 October to 2 November 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November 2007, in Hyderabad, India, from 3 to 6 December 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 15 to 18 November 2009, respectively, and welcoming the convening of the fifth meeting of the Forum in Vilnius in 2010,

"*Welcoming*, in view of the existing gaps in information and communication technologies infrastructure across Africa, the first and second Summits of Connect Africa, held in Kigali on 29 and 30 October 2007 and in Cairo on 14 May 2008, an initiative aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Recognizing* the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment, of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

"*Noting* the contribution of the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development,

"*Noting also* the intersessional meeting of the Commission, held in Santiago from 12 to 14 November 2008, and the twelfth session of the Commission, held in Geneva from 25 to 29 May 2009,

"*Taking note* of Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/7 of 24 July 2009 on assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

"*Stressing* that, for the majority of the poor, the developmental promise of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizing the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communication technologies, to bridge the digital divide,

"*Recognizing* the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

"1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, into the global economy;

"2. *Stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, making effective use of information and communication technologies, on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

"3. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communication technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and South-South cooperation;

"4. *Also recognizes* that information and communication technologies present new opportunities and challenges, and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer, on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

"5. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communication technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socio-economic activity;

"6. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to the new technologies, especially information and communication technologies for development;

"7. *Recalls* the improvements and innovations in financing mechanisms, including the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Geneva Declaration of Principles, and, in this regard, invites voluntary contributions to its financing;

"8. *Recognizes* that South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular cooperation, can be a useful tool to promote the development of information and communication technologies;

"9. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communication technologies sector;

"10. *Also encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the need for resources in this regard;

"11. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in that regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communication technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

"12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2010, on the basis of consultations with all relevant organizations, a specific report containing recommendations on how the process towards enhanced cooperation should be pursued;

"13. *Invites* Member States to support the meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries in the preparatory meetings of the Internet Governance Forum and in the Forum itself in 2009 and 2010, and to consider contributing to the multi-stakeholder trust fund created for the Forum, as appropriate;

"14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consider providing from the regular budget the necessary support to ensure the sustainability of the core activities and operations of the secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum, in order to carry out its programme of activities in accordance with its mandate;

"15. *Requests* the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, during its thirteenth session, which will take place in May 2010, to organize a discussion with the Heads of the relevant United Nations entities involved in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes, with a view to preparing a review by the Commission of the five-year progress made towards implementation of those outcomes, including modalities of implementation and follow-up, and encourages all relevant United Nations agencies, including the regional commission and action-line facilitators, to contribute to this effort;

"16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the review of the five-year progress made towards implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes."

10. At its 41st meeting, on 9 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Information and communication technologies for development" (A/C.2/64/L.62), submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Mohamed Chérif Diallo (Guinea), on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.26.

11. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

12. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the Vice-Chairperson, in the course of which he orally corrected draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.62 (see A/C.2/64/SR.41).

13. Also at its 41st meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.62, as orally corrected (see para. 16, draft resolution II).

14. Following the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

15. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.62, draft resolution A/C.2/64/L.26 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

16. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[1] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[2] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[3] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[4]

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[5]

Stressing the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all,

Noting that Governments, as well as the private sector, civil society and the United Nations, and other international organizations, have an important role in bridging the digital divide for the benefit of all and in building an inclusive and people-centred information society,

Recognizing that well-developed information and communication network infrastructures, such as information superhighways, act as one of the main technological enablers of the digital opportunities, and noting, in this regard, the Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway convened by the Government of Azerbaijan in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 11 November 2008,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, in the global economy;

2. *Also recognizes* the immense potential that building connectivity can have in contributing to social progress, including in advancing the status of women and promoting social integration and tolerance;

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[1] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[2] See resolution 59/220.
[3] See A/60/687.
[4] See resolution 60/252.
[5] See resolution 60/1.

3. *Stresses* the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information infrastructures to bridge the digital divide in the region, and encourages interested Member States to participate in the development of regional connectivity solutions;

4. *Recognizes* the need to build connectivity in the region to help to bridge the digital divide, and in this regard welcomes the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway initiative and the readiness of the Republic of Azerbaijan to coordinate regional efforts aimed at realizing this initiative.

Draft resolution II
Information and communication technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006 and 62/182 of 19 December 2007, Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, its resolution 63/202 of 19 December 2008 and other relevant resolutions,

Noting that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting also that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[1] will further enrich the information society,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[2] as endorsed by the General Assembly,[3] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[4] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[5]

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[6]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes at the regional and international levels,[7]

Stressing the need to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all,

Recognizing the importance of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum, as a multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss various matters, including, inter alia, public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, and reiterating that all Governments, on an equal footing, should carry out their roles and responsibilities for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet, but not in the day-to-day

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[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October-3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

[2] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.

[3] See resolution 59/220.

[4] See A/60/687.

[5] See resolution 60/252.

[6] See resolution 60/1.

[7] A/64/64-E/2009/10.

technical and operational matters that do not impact on international public policy issues,

Taking note of the discussions at the fourth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt, from 15 to 18 November 2009 on the future of the Forum, which generally welcomed the renewal of its mandate and recognized the need for further discussion on improvement of its working methods,

Recalling the first, second, third and fourth meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in October and November 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in December 2008, and in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2009, respectively, and welcoming the convening of the fifth meeting of the Forum, to be held in Vilnius in 2010,

Welcoming, in view of the existing gaps in information and communication technologies infrastructure, the Summits of Connect Africa held in Kigali in October 2007 and in Cairo in May 2008 and the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States Summit held in Minsk in November 2009, which are regional initiatives aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment, of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

Noting the contribution of the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development,

Noting also the twelfth session of the Commission, held in Geneva from 25 to 29 May 2009, and the intersessional meeting of the Commission held in Geneva from 9 to 11 November 2009,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/7 of 24 July 2009, on assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Stressing that, for the majority of the poor, the developmental promise of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizing the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communication technologies, to bridge the digital divide,

Recognizing the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help

to expedite the integration of all countries, particularly developing countries, into the global economy;

2. *Stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, making effective use of information and communication technologies, on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

3. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communication technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and South-South cooperation;

4. *Also recognizes* that information and communication technologies present new opportunities and challenges, and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer, on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

5. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communication technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socio-economic activity;

6. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to the new technologies, especially information and communication technologies for development;

7. *Recalls* the improvements and innovations in financing mechanisms, including the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Geneva Declaration of Principles,[2] and in this regard invites voluntary contributions to its financing;

8. *Recognizes* that South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular cooperation, can be a useful tool to promote the development of information and communication technologies;

9. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva[2] and Tunis[4] phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communication technologies sector;

10. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by Tunisia, host of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant international and regional organizations, for organizing annually the ICT 4 All Forum and technological exhibition as a platform within the

framework of the follow-up to the Summit to promote a dynamic business environment for the information and communication technologies sector worldwide;

11. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the need for resources in this regard;

12. *Notes* the organization of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2009 by the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to facilitate interaction among actors implementing the Summit's action lines, and invites the organizers to fully engage Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector in the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2010, to be held from 10 to 14 May 2010 in Geneva;

13. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in that regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communication technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

14. *Also recognizes* the role of the United Nations Group on the Information Society as an inter-agency mechanism of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination designed to coordinate United Nations implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes;

15. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to consider the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet;[8]

16. *Invites* Member States to support the meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries in the preparatory meetings of the Internet Governance Forum and in the Forum itself in 2010;

17. *Encourages* Member States, the private sector and all other relevant stakeholders to consider strengthening the secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum in order to support its activities and operations, in accordance with its mandate, including by providing additional funds, where possible, to the Trust Fund in support of the secretariat;

18. *Requests* the Commission, during its thirteenth session, which will be held at the halfway point to the 2015 overall review, to organize a substantive discussion on the progress made over five years in the implementation of the Summit outcomes, including consideration of the modalities of implementation and follow-up to the Summit, and invites all facilitators and stakeholders to take this into account with regard to their contribution to that session;

[8] E/2009/92.

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution.